

#3: We Eat Breakfast

Think Together



- Breakfast really is the **most important meal of the day!** Talk with your family about why it is important to eat a healthy and balanced breakfast every morning.
- Healthy breakfast eaters are more likely to maintain a healthy weight and are healthier and eat more nutritiously overall.
- Think about how **to build a healthy breakfast plate** based on the five food groups.
- Make a **goal** to eat at least one sit-down breakfast together each week that has all five food groups.
- Think about how you can **balance** the amount you are eating from each food group throughout the day. For example, some mornings you may only have foods from three of the five food groups on your plate for breakfast and will need to balance this by having foods from the other food groups throughout the rest of the day.

HEALTHY CONVERSATION STARTERS

What is your favorite healthy breakfast food?

What do you think a "balanced breakfast" means?

Why is it important to start every day with a healthy breakfast?

What is something you can choose for breakfast that is quick but also healthy?

Eat Together

- **Eating together as a family is important for breakfast time too.** Families that eat together tend to eat a healthier breakfast; eating together also gives parents and caregivers the chance to model healthy eating behaviors.
- We are often in a hurry in the mornings. While a sit-down, balanced and healthy breakfast should be the goal, **healthy quick-start or grab-and-go breakfast items** should be available for backup.
- Consider preparing some breakfast items the night before to **make breakfast faster and easier to prepare** in the morning. Make oat muffins with shredded zucchini and carrots or pre-slice strawberries to put on top of a whole-grain waffle.
- If your child isn't hungry in the morning or your family schedule doesn't afford much time for breakfast at home, **learn about breakfast programs offered at school.**
- Remember the importance of a good night's sleep: Children who go to bed earlier and get enough sleep are more likely to wake up in time to eat a healthy breakfast and have a greater appetite in the morning.

Move Together

- On the weekends, follow a healthy breakfast with **a walk or a trip to a local playground.**
- On school days, follow a healthy breakfast by **walking to school** when possible or by walking to your bus stop. While waiting for the bus, **play a quick active game** (e.g. Simon Says or Animal Action). Every little bit of activity adds up.



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Take **Healthy Steps** for **Healthy Lives** Together

How to Build a Healthy Breakfast Plate

Pick at least one item from each of the five food groups.

Protein Source	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eggs (use limited added fat when cooking) (e.g., poached, scrambled, omelet or hard boiled) • Lean breakfast meats (e.g., Canadian bacon, turkey bacon or sausage) • Peanut butter, almond butter (with no added sugars) • Nuts (e.g., almonds, walnuts, etc.)
Dairy Item	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk (non-fat or low-fat) • Yogurt (non-fat/low-fat and low sugar) • Cheese (low-fat) • Cottage cheese (low-fat)
Whole-Grain Item (Carbohydrate)	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole-grain cold cereal • Whole-grain hot cereal (e.g., oatmeal) • Whole-grain bread or toast • Whole-grain waffles or pancakes
Vegetable	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh, frozen or canned • 100% vegetable juice • Cut-up vegetables added to scrambled eggs or omelets
Fruit	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh, frozen, canned or cups (no added sugars and packaged in water or 100% juice) • 100% fruit juice • Dried fruit (e.g., raisins with no added sugars) • Cut-up fruit added to yogurt or cottage cheese or put on top of cold cereal or oatmeal

Healthy Family Trivia

True or False: Skipping breakfast and/or being hungry impact a child's ability to learn.

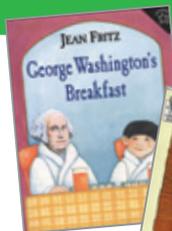


Quick-Start Breakfast Ideas

- Wonderful wrap: Grill a whole-grain tortilla filled with scrambled eggs, fat-free shredded cheese and cut-up vegetables; serve with orange wedges.
- Super smoothie: Blend peanut butter (no sugar added), fat-free milk, rolled oats and a frozen, cut-up banana; serve with a whole-grain English muffin topped with sliced tomatoes.

Read Together

- **George Washington's Breakfast** by Jean Fritz George (fiction)
- **Pancakes for Breakfast** by Tomie dePaola (fiction)



TRIVIA ANSWER: True. Children who eat a healthy breakfast have better concentration and more energy. They also get along better with their classmates and have fewer behavioral problems, tardiness and visits to the school nurse.